

HAMS On The Airways

By PATTI COLEMAN

Three Bosse High School senior boys really "ham" it up. Walter Heller, Joe Blum and Jim Goodner are ham radio operators.

Jim and Walter have been licensed about five years and Joe is the "baby," having had his license about two and one-half years.

Walter said that wanting to become a ham usually stems from an interest in science. They all agreed that other ham operators did a lot to get them started also.

"Almost anyone likes to turn on a radio and be able to get a station many miles away," they said. "And with our kind of radio, you can talk to those same people."

The fellows said they have made many friends over the radio and everyone is called by their first names. Confidentially, they said half the time nobody knows last names.

Joe said one funny thing he remembers is talking to Charlie on the radio and joking with him. When Joe finally met Charlie he was shocked to discover he was a Catholic priest.

There are over 150,000 amateur radio operators in the United States and 200 in Vanderburgh County. Operators range in age from eight years of age to 100 years old, both male and female. As far as these fellows know there are four female radio operators in the Tri-State area.

Although these boys work together quite a bit, they are all interested in different aspects of operating.

Jim likes to talk to foreign countries and so far has racked up a total of 60 countries with which he has made contact. The Iron Curtain countries also have amateur radio operators. There are not as many as in the U.S., and the operators are limited to certain topics of discussion. Jim said that usually you can't talk to an operator in a foreign country too long, because there are so many Americans trying, it is hard to get through.



Hamming it up are Walter Heller (seated) and (standing from left to right)

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Jim continued that most of the people he contacts speak English fairly understandable.

Experimenting and building new equipment is Walter's hobby. He likes to devise new instruments and perfect them.

Joe likes to talk, and to anybody, anywhere. Experimenting with antennas is another of his interests. He said no matter how much equipment and transmitters and receivers you have, without a good antenna, you're sunk.

According to the three teens, people operate for other reasons also. There is the ham whose sole interest is in emergency operation. He keeps portable equipment ready for use at all times and in case of

disaster could make contact with other operators.

Others work only for Civil Defense purposes and other are in "traffic." The person in traffic acts as a relay station to send messages to all parts of the U.S.

Each operator all over the world has call letters. Walter is better known to other hams as K9AYH, Joe's alias is K9EYD, and Jim, K9GGW. Jim was also a ham in Oklahoma previous to moving here three years ago. There he was known as K5BIG.

These call letters, and operating licenses, are issued by the Federal Communications Commission.

Walter, Jim and Joe have other interests. Walter is the photographer for the school's paper, The School Spirit, and is a junior



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CLASS of 63

JIM = CLASS of 1959

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citizen Boy Scout master. Science and general chemistry interest him very much but he would like to have a career in the diplomatic corps. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Heller, 764 Lombard Ave.

Joe, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Max Blum, 2108 Bellemeade Ave., has an application in at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he would like to develop a future as a nuclear physicist. Tennis is his favorite sport and he is on the Bosse tennis team.

Business seems to be the goal for Jim. He is on the advertising staff of the school paper and is also director of WPSR, the radio station of the Public Schools. Jim will attend Indiana University upon graduation in June. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Goodner, 2512 E. Gum St.